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used. If the person is rich and important they raise a stone for him. 766
If not the whole family assembles in his parents' house, kills an ox if rich enough, feasts, drinks rum and sings and dances all night and until the noon meal the next day. There is no invocation or ceremony and nothing is taken to the tomb. Among some of the other Menabe the relatives take a banana trunk, wrap it in cloth, lay it in the house in the place the corpse would occupy, and go through the complete funeral ceremony, including mourning, over it. The banana trunk is thrown away after the ceremony and the cloth may be used. A similar practice existed among the Imerina but there the cloth was wrapped around a *tsangambato* ("upright stone") erected in honor of the deceased. A banana tree is used as a substitute for the body [824]
because the banana plant symbolizes a man. Like fortunate human beings it dies only in old age, after it has borne fruit, and leaves offspring, i.e., the new shoots that push up from the root of the plant. The form of the fruit is another reason the Menabe give for choosing it, for the banana is to the natives a phallic symbol and an emblem of fertility.

MOURNING CUSTOMS

Mourning is never violent. There is no loud wailing, beating of 765
the breast or self mutilation. Mourners of both sexes wear old and dirty clothes, allow their hair to hang loose and dishevelled and rarely bathe. Distant relatives wear mourning for one or two months, a husband or wife usually for six months, and a parent who has lost a beloved child may wear it for a year or more.

Among the Menabe the relatives assemble at the house of death one or two months after the funeral to put off mourning. All persons who have entered the house while the body lay in it are expected to be there. An ox is killed and a person who is the only child of his or her mother asperges the place where the corpse has lain with the blood. The same person then takes more of the blood, rum, white powder made by grating the *clostyfus* fungus, and the plants *orinadro*, *taivantsiona*, *silosa*, *sakipika* and *longosa*, cut in small pieces, and puts all in a large wooden bowl with water. He then takes some of the mixture in a cupped leaf and pours a little into the hands of everyone present. They wash their faces with it and this ends the mourning period. Some begin at once to grease and braid their hair while others sing and dance. The ceremony ends with a feast. The Ihanjo also have a ceremony to end mourning, but I could not learn the details.

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ERECTION OF MEMORIAL STONES

Among the Tanala Ikongo a second ceremony for the dead is held some time after the funeral. The interval does not seem to be fixed and may vary from a few months to two years. Sadaro Antoine says: "The *orimbato* or festival commemorating the dead consists in raising one or more stones in memory of a person who has died either in the village or at a distance." There seems to have been a feeling that it was much more necessary for those whose bodies had not been placed in the gens tomb. "It is always celebrated immediately after the harvest of wet rice, i.e., between the months of January and April. The size of the stone depends on the wealth of the dead person or his family. There are some stones more than 8 meters high and more than a meter across. Before the ceremony begins the members of the family are called together to discuss how many professional dancers and musicians will be invited and how many oxen killed and to pound the rice which will be given to the visitors. The festival is begun on a lucky day, a Thursday, at four or five o'clock in the afternoon. All the women assemble in a house called the *tranombary* [lit. "woman's house"]. The head of the family and the other men assemble to the east of the sacrifice post, *lowaka*. Conch shell trumpets and the *kazolaky* [small double-headed drums, always played in pairs] are sounded three times to assemble the spirits that may be absent. The head of the family then says: 'Oh you [naming the person commemorated] and all the ancestors, your relatives and the whole tribe are celebrating a festival. May the weather be good and none of the people fall ill. Heap up the goods of all your relatives and save them all from ennui.' At the end he asks that the soul of the person for whom the festival is given may be received by the other ancestral souls, for according to the superstition the soul of a person whose fête has not been celebrated is not received by the others. At the sound of the trumpets and *kazolaky* everyone weeps. After this the festival usually lasts three or four days but if the person is rich it continues fifteen or twenty days, during which time they feast and sing and dance to the *kazolaky* and *adabo* [two forms of drum]. The relatives of the dead and some others go to the forest to cut vines and to make a *lakana*, a sort of canoe on which the stone is laid to make it easier to transport and to keep it from breaking." Actually the *lakana* is a crude sledge. "During this time one or two oxen are killed for the stone cutters. After this all the people, accompanied by dancers and drummers, assemble to bring the stone. The men drag it while the women

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sing to urge them on. During the transport two or three cattle are killed. When the stone has arrived at the place where it is to be set up, the brother or son of the dead man mounts upon it. While the stone is being dressed and before its erection the members of the family take vessels of water and asperge it and the helpers. They ask the protection of *Zanahary* and the ancestors that the stone may not break. When the stone has been set up, the family begins to distribute cattle in the following way: one for the young women, one for the young men and one for the important people. After these have been killed and the meat distributed everyone returns home." The Ikongo erect only tall upright stones, identical with European menhirs, and place them wherever they wish, usually beside a road or on an elevation where they can be seen from a distance. The menhirs of an entire family may be grouped together, but this is rather rare. No sacrifices are offered at the menhirs.

Among the Menabe the erection of memorial stones is less frequent than among the Ikongo and they are not thought necessary for the peace of the dead person's soul. The stones may be of either of two types: menhirs, which are called *vato lahy* ("male stones"), or tables consisting of a large irregular flat slab supported by three upright stones. The latter are called *vato vavy* ("female stones") by most of the gentes, but the Zafindriantrova sometimes refer to them as *aloalo*, a term which the southwestern tribes of the island apply to memorial carvings placed on tombs. The *vato lahy* are always raised to commemorate men, the *vato vavy* usually commemorate women, but may be raised for men if the family is poor or if no stone suitable for a menhir can be found. The three upright stones are said to symbolize the three stones set in a fireplace to support the cooking pots, hence the woman's half of the work and family. The use of *vato lahy* appears to be very ancient, that of *vato vavy* somewhat more recent. An informant of the Zafiakotry gens says that they erected their first *vato vavy* when he was ten years old, i.e., about 1870. Both types may be erected anywhere, the relatives choosing the place they think the deceased would have preferred, but as a rule all the memorial stones of a village will be grouped together in a single sacred place. The two types are usually arranged in pairs, the table immediately to the west of the menhir, but each monument commemorates a different individual and those of a pair are rarely erected simultaneously.

The Zafimaniry say that in the most ancient times they used cut stones for their memorials, then lost the art of stone cutting.